

(c) the response of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): (a) to (c). The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Technical Assistance Bureau had offered to carry out detailed studies in respect of modernisation of Air Traffic Systems at Bombay and Delhi Airports with a view to assessing system required and also to draw up detailed specifications in respect of various equipment required for modernisation. A limited assistance from ICAO could be considered for drawing up detailed specifications of equipment and systems if expertise available with the National Airports Authority is not adequate.

Antarctica Expeditions

2402. SHRI VJAY N. PATIL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how many countries have sent expeditions to Antarctica during the last three years;

(b) whether the Antarctica has been an object of immense scientific interest for India; and

(c) if so, the achievements made so far by India in Scientific fields through Antarctica expeditions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN): (a) As per information available with the Department, the number of such countries is 20.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) India's scientific programme in Antarctica has enabled her scientists to gain first hand knowledge in the frontier areas of Antarctic research, especially in the fields of geology, geo-physics, meteorology, biology, oceanography, geo-magnetism and atmospheric physics. A wealth of useful information has been generated on the designing and development of infrastructure, living and working facilities in Antarctica and hands on experience of adapting innovative technology for application in the harsh environment of Antarctica gained.

Export Cargo

2403. SHRI VJAY N. PATIL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether mode of air carriage of export cargo in India has not developed prominently in comparison to other developed countries;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to improve the enlarge mode of carriage of export Air Cargo?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) (a) to (c). During the past two decades the percentage share of air freight in exports has risen from 28% to 35% and imports from 12% to 20%. Due to heavy spurt in cargo traffic during last two years there has been a case of demand out-stripping available capacity. The situation is being remedied by acquiring by Air India two Boeing 747 Combi Aircraft, leasing of Cargo aircraft and allowing other airlines to operate cargo flights. Government is also clearing extra-section cargo flights during the peak cargo season with inward loading rights.